1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

778
756 women resort for the cure of every ailment, physical or moral.

756 Is a child ailing, it is carried by its anxious mother
● 755 to the most eminent Sheikh within reach, who cures it by imposition, not of hands, but of feet, by breathing on it with his holy breath, or by hanging some sacred
[777] charm around its little neck. The first-named remedy may sound startling, but is actually applied, as I can vouch from personal observation.[1] The baby is laid on its back, and the Sheikh, laying his hands on the shoulders of two of his disciples who stand on either side, places his feet and rests his entire weight for a few seconds on the child's body. The Dervishes also
787 expound dreams, read the future, and furnish every other species of occult information of which their clients may stand in need.

776 Some Christian saints belonging to the Armenian calendar are also highly revered by the Kûrdish tribesmen. Of these perhaps Surp Serkis, or St. Sergius, is the one whose aid is most frequently sought. Kûrdish warriors, when about to enter on a campaign, resort
[731 to his tomb, and seek to enlist his favour and pro-
779 tection by there sacrificing a ram and lighting wax tapers.

776 The strange and widespread Oriental myth of Khidhr-Elias, in his double character of sea and land deity, is also current among the Kûrds, with whom he is Khidhr on land and Elias on the sea, and by whom he is invoked as a kind of guardian angel.

[1] I witnessed this strange practice at Bekeiân, after a service in the zâwîah of the Merkezî, or "dancing" Dervishes, as they are commonly called by Europeans.

Shaykh Muhammad at Hajji Umran. This is the most famous of the group and is believed to effect miraculous cures. It is said that the Shepherd used to take out the sheep of Shaykh Muhammad each day. The pasturage was not good, and Shaykh Muhammad wondered why his sheep were so fat and healthy. One day he concealed himself and was amazed to see the Shepherd fly off through the air, with the sheep flying behind him in a line, to some rich, faroff mountain meadow. Thus Shaykh Muhammad learned of the power of this man, and asked the people to visit the Shepherd's grave before his own. A merchant in Rowanduz, one 'Abd al-Qattar, claimed to have cured an ailment which he described as "sand in the urine" by drinking water obtained near this shrine.

Some of these shrines may be of considerable antiquity, and an indication of this is the fact that they are in most cases associated with trees. In a region which has almost been denuded of heavier timber, it is striking to find a lone oak on some barren hillside with the grave of a holy man beneath its branches. The townspeople of Rowanduz were unable to comment on this association, but investigation among the villagers might reveal some interesting views. It seems quite clear, however, that a pagan survival is represented here, a complex dating from a time in which some religious significance was attached to trees or groves. It might be remarked that cutting down such a tree, however great the need for wood, was believed to bring the greatest catastrophe. People visit these shrines for a variety of reasons, those suffering from some "incurable" malady, women who wish a male child, or men who believe themselves hampered by misfortune. The magical power in the person of the holy man, alive or dead, is termed berkat

the evil eye, but have other purposes. The bodyguard of a chieftain might carry one which protects him from gunfire, and a great number are used to cure bodily ills. One of the mullas makes a practice of writing charms of this type. Such pieces of paper are usually soaked in water and the liquid is then imbibed. Recently a poor woman with some complaint visited the medical officer and the latter wrote her a prescription which could have been filled in Erbil. Under the impression that the medical officer, who neglected to explain the matter to her, operated like the mulla, the woman took the piece of paper to her home, mixed it with water, and drank it off. It might be mentioned that she was cured, and, the doctor said, reappeared the next day to request an identical piece of paper as insurance against the illness in the future. There are many amateur practitioners of white magic in the town, darvishes, midwives, and others, some of whom demand fees and others not. The barber, Hajji Mustafa, has one panacea for all ills. He ties a piece of string about the patient's wrist and "prays" over it. The investigator was furnished with some almost classical rationalizations of illnesses, for example, "if a man is bitten by a mad dog, he will be cured when the dog is killed."

The darvish (from a Persian word meaning "poor" and adopted into Arabic in this sense) occupies a position of considerable importance in everyday life. It is unnecessary here to discuss the origins and the character of the darvish

dilated and bloodshot, as they hoarsely reiterate their achievements. They are also supposed to be able to "read" over those who have been bitten by snakes and effect their cure. They sell or give outsiders lumps of sugar on which certain symbols have been scrawled. If eaten, this sugar is believed to confer the power of snake-charming. They have other exhibitions, such as mutilating their bodies in various ways without experiencing pain. Hajji Mustafa exhibited his forearms which were covered with scars from past demonstrations. In addition to these displays and their tumultous meetings, the darvishes commonly practise white magic for those who seek their aid, but are for the most part engaged in everyday employment.

The darvishes usually wear the garb of the countryside. Hajji Mustafa wore Kurdish trousers and shirt, but disdained the sash. His headdress consisted of a skullcap with a turban wound flat about it as in the case of the mullas. On formal errands, for example, when he was called to the serai in connection with firing the Ramadan cannon, Hajji Mustafa added a light brown Arab cloak and carried a walking-stick or staff. Some darvishes bind their waists with the rosary of 99 wooden beads. The tools of Hajji Mustafa's darvish activities, observed in his house, consisted of a flag, an old rifle, a sword, a huge tambourine perhaps three feet in diameter, a begging bowl (the traditional badge of the darvish) made of a large hollowed gourd with a strap for carrying it over the shoulder, and a tattered copy of the Shajara (Arabic, "tree") of 'Abd

I had only a little, so they started whipping me." 159
"How much did they take?" the Cossack officer asked. 792
"Fifty tumans," he answered, and the officers ordered the other Jews to pay the sum unless they wanted to be beaten also.

When the Russians came to Rowandus, my family fled to Erbil. I was then about twenty years of age. My father lost all his wealth and became destitute. I told him not to worry, because I would find him the best possible livelihood. I went to a barbershop belonging to a man named Amin. He was shaving one man and another was waiting his turn. I told the customer waiting to be seated, equipped myself with a razor and a towel, and began shaving him. "Who are you and what are you doing?" Amin asked me. "This is not your affair," I answered. "What?" he shouted, "Get out of here. I do not want you." "If you do not want me," I said, "I want you." He was pleased with this answer, and kept me with him for some time. Gradually the war caused things to become worse, and the customers disappeared. I had to have money for my family, so I bought a sack and filled it with coloured sand. I went through [755] the streets of Erbil crying, "Doctor! Doctor! I can cure all illnesses!" People asked me to come into their houses, but I refused until they paid a fee. When I received the money, I went in and poured my sand on the face of the sick man, reciting from the Quran. I gave these sums to my father, but the Turks [727] marched him and my brother to Turkey and they were never seen again. I managed to escape this march.

When the war ended, the British came to Iraq. I was then in the service of a notable named Hajji Hawres in Shaqlawa. There was a Major Hay in the district who spoke Kurdish, and, when he heard from Hajji Hawres what a clever man I was, he took me with him to Rowandus. He gave me the job of giving food to 200 families of Rowandus I had known in my childhood. While I was working for the British, all [669] of the Kurds revolted under Shaykh Mahmud and I ran away to Erbil again. On my return to Rowandus, I opened a tea-shop, but the business failed. After that I opened a shop to sell roasted meat, but the work was too dirty for me. Finally I went to an 443
Armenian merchant named Jagmur, and he entrusted me 159
with goods worth 2000 rupees to sell in the villages 792
around Rowandus. When I returned, I found I had 200 rupees profit. I took this money to Jagmur, and he said that because I was industrious and honest I could keep it as a gift. I made several other trips for Jagmur, always profitable, but I found traveling for this purpose bothersome. I took my money and opened a shop in Rowandus to sell groceries. When

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

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Fig. 181. Bush with rags tied on, planted inside stone wall on the burial ground outside Kalavan.

trees which have no rags at all. Fraser[6] also distinguishes between these two cases when writing about "heaps of stones" in Kurdistan, which must correspond to Fellberg's[7] saints' graves in Luristan; the matter is also referred to by Bishop[8]. Fraser says: "Those who have breathed their shrine from their shirts or trousers and tie them to the bushes around", but he also speaks of other graves of great men marked with "... a pole with a flag to point out the place to utter a prayer". Maunsell[9] also distinguishes between the two things, but lets them be found at the same spot, saying: "... a low stone-wall" (that surrounds a holy grave) "on which ... green and white flags ... On the branches which overhang the shrine rags and scraps of clothing ...". It was said concerning the grave with the rag tree on the building site near Sehkmani, that it was pregnant women and sick persons who had become sick that hung up the rags as votive offerings. This agrees with Fellberg's[7] report that the Lurs "servir les femmes pour qu'elles deviennent fécondes ..." to the holy graves.

Donaldson[10] refers to "desire giving trees", though without a grave, and goes on to say: "Perhaps at one time a holy man, or a descendant of the Prophet, sat under such a tree ... it came to be re-

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1978 revered ... the evildoers ... tie rags and strips to its branches, and at the same time they make a request and take a vow that they will perform some meritorious act if the request is granted."

In order that the promise shall not be removed voluntary, the rags must "first come common" is mentioned by Mansf[1].

1789 1978 Concerning the custom of tying rags to the branches of trees in the vicinity of shaikhs' and saints' graves, Nikitine[2] writes: "... tout qu'il vous faudra le, ce chiffon est gonflé des prières du saint", and approaches the idea, also verbally mentioned by Fahlborg, that there may be a parallel between these hung-up rags and the waving wooden shrings of the Ainu, indeed, with the idea behind the praying wheels of the Mongols and other Lamaistic Buddhists.

[191] There can be little doubt that the rag tree / an old heathen survival. This view is espoused by Massoul[3], Ebersolt[4], Fahlborg[5] and Sumer[6], Isaiah[7], who has seen rag trees in the Taurus Mountains of Turkey, believes that in this custom a dead crippled remnants of the ancient consecration ceremony that is still preserved in its entirety by a few Indian tribes.

● 1955 1982 The sacrifice of animals as a means of procuring health was referred to by my informants. She intended to due course to sacrifice a sheep in view that her 6 year old brother's broken and badly-set leg might improve when she took him next to the doctor, possibly to Baghdad.

[369] [384] [525]

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10:Johnson G-S (no date) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Iraq

778 On hills and knolls anywhere in Kurdistan may be found a pile of stones under a tree with pieces of cloth tied about it. It is called a shakko, and people who are sick come and sit beside it, perhaps leaving a lamb as a sacrificial offering, or a sum of money which can only be removed by someone really in need of it. By this means they are cured of many diseases.

778 Some say that a shakko is the grave of a descendant of an Imam. I once asked an old man sitting near a shakko about its origin.

"My father heard from his father, who learned from our ancestors", he said, "that it is very old. It was here in the days of Mohammed the Prophet, and some

[291] Shaykhan district. Johnson in Kurdish dress; Turkish trousers, cut very full from a single width of cuff; a wide, knitted cotton waistband; a loose shirt under a felt tunic, and a turban

[p. 384 (A)]